

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE:**           **SOCIAL SERVICES**

**DATE:**               **OCTOBER 25, 2012**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS LOEB  
                  KENNY  
                  BENTLEY  
                  STRAINER  
                  WOOD  
                  SOKOL  
                  WESTCOTT

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:  
                  SUZANNE WHEELER, ACTING COMMISSIONER  
                  JULIE MONTERO, FISCAL MANAGER  
                  RACHEL DUROSE, FOSTER CARE COMMUNITY SERVICES AID  
                  BOBBIE BRADWAY, SENIOR SOCIAL WELFARE EXAMINER  
                  TOBIE BINDER, SENIOR ACCOUNT CLERK  
                  DANIEL G. STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
                  PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
                  MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
                  JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
                  KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER  
SUPERVISORS CONOVER  
                                  MASON  
                                  MERLINO  
                                  TAYLOR  
                                  THOMAS  
                  DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*  
                  JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Loeb called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 10:00 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Mr. Loeb advised there were no items to be addressed for Countryside Adult Home and he extended privilege of the floor to Suzanne Wheeler, Acting Commissioner for the Department of Social Services (DSS). Ms. Wheeler distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Beginning with Agenda Item 3, Announcements, Ms. Wheeler recognized the Team Leader and Team Player for the month of October as follows, noting that a copy of the narratives which supported the awards was attached to the agenda:

Team Leader: Bobbie Bradway, Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the Medicaid Chronic Care Unit; and

Team Player: Rachel DuRose, Foster Care Community Services Aid.

The announcements were followed by a round of applause from the Committee.

Continuing with her agenda review, Ms. Wheeler advised that Agenda Item 4, DSS Program Information and Education, would be addressed by Ms. DuRose and Tobie Binder, Senior Account Clerk. She explained that the tasks of maximizing State and Federal reimbursements and the monitoring of Foster Care rate changes and intercepts (recoupments), were handled by Ms. DuRose and Ms. Binder, respectively. Ms. Wheeler enthusiastically reported that their efforts had achieved significant and measurable results for the Department. She informed they had attended a regional training forum for which they had assumed leadership roles to define and explain Warren County's policies and procedures as a result of their proven effectiveness.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. DuRose, who explained there were five Federal and State funding sources available to each child admitted into the Foster Care program. She said Title IV-E funds carried the most reimbursement potential (largely requiring no local share contribution) for the Foster Care Program and noted that many steps and several Departments were involved in obtaining funding. She stated there was approximately \$250,000 in available (non-reimbursable) funds, and as a result of her collaborative efforts with the State, reimbursement had been obtained, reducing the current non-reimbursable amount to approximately \$5,000 (representing one child). Current program enrollment, she said, was between 60 and 70 children. Ms. DuRose asserted the project and its accomplishments had been the high point of her career with Warren County.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Binder, who explained the Intercept process was a mechanism used to retrieve or recoup overpaid monies; for example she noted that non-reimbursable funds were paid by the County as a Local Share, which was not necessary as the program was fully funded by the State and Federal Government. She explained the maximum allowable rates that the County was allowed to pay for a child in Foster Care was determined by the State and the rates could change retroactively. She stated that it was her responsibility to identify and retrieve overpayments. Ms. Binder said she had learned of the Intercepts program through her supervisor and subsequently studied the process going back to 2008. She advised that approximately \$158,000 in Local Share payments were reimbursed from one institution within one year, as the costs were eligible for Federal and State reimbursements. She said it was evident in the training classes that Warren County had been the only county which had accomplished fund retrieval as described. Ms. DuRose stated Warren County had the lowest Local Share overpayment amount of the participating counties. Ms. Binder added that Warren County had made a significant State-wide impact by reducing the State's non-reimbursable payments by approximately \$2 million.

Mr. Loeb summarized Action Agenda Items 5.A1 through A7 as follows:

- (A1) Abolish Position: Account Clerk - Accounting Unit
- (A2) Abolish Position: Caseworker - Preventive/Day Care Unit
- (A3-4) Create & Fill Position: Senior Caseworker - Child Preventive/Day Care Unit
- (A5) Abolish Position: Caseworker - Foster Care/Adoption Unit
- (A6-7) Create & Fill Position: Senior Caseworker - Foster Care/Adoption Unit

Ms. Wheeler noted that the position of Account Clerk was no longer needed.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to abolish the position of Account Clerk in the Accounting Unit (Agenda Item 5. A1) effective January 1, 2013 and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. **(Note: Subsequent to the meeting, it was determined that this position would be abolished in conjunction with the 2013 County Budget and no Committee action was necessary).**

In light of the proposed hiring freeze, motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to table Agenda Items A2 through A7 listed above.

Addressing the Budget Performance Reports through September 30, 2012, Ms. Wheeler noted that revenues for the months of July through September were not included in the report due to complications with the State causing posting delays. She estimated the revenue amount for July through September to be \$1,721,000, making the year-to-date figure closer to \$10 million.

Ms. Wheeler reported a slight increase in overtime from the same period last year due to Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) training and a backlog in the Temporary Assistance Unit due to a staff illness. Additionally, she said, a Foster Care meeting had required overtime. Messrs. Westcott and Sokol noted the significant decrease in overtime for the year-to-date in spite of the increase for the period and Mr. Loeb attributed the positive results to training and reorganization efforts to improve long term efficiency.

A short discussion ensued with regard to applicants for Temporary Assistance who listed addresses in other counties. Ms. Wheeler stated she was highly aware of the issue and noted that the address history was often researched to ensure eligibility integrity.

Referencing the Team Player and Team Leader awards, Mr. Geraghty expressed appreciation for the dedication and leadership shown by Ms. DuRose, Ms. Binder and Ms. Wheeler.

Mr. Loeb said an executive session was necessary to discuss matters relating to the appointment of a particular person.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to enter into executive session pursuant to Section 105 (f) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive Session was declared from 10:20 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Committee reconvened and Mr. Loeb announced no action was necessary pursuant to the executive session.

There being no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Ms. Wood, Mr. Loeb adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joanne Collins. Legislative Office Specialist

